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Beyond the Moon





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Beyond the Moon

by

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no 1

TO MY MOTHER

*Who has stood by me in all
my escapades*

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CURTAIN

The rain comes down in thin gray sheets
And slithers on the ground.
Brown leaves just hanging by a thread
Break sadly off and sail along
Like bits of old brown cloth
Flung by a careless hand
From the window of a building
Tall and slim.
The half-gaunt trees now stand
With withered arms thrown to the sky.
While last year's corn beside the road
Bends lower to the rapid beat
Of rainy needles hurling down.
The earth sends up a pungent mist,
A sting-like smell of old pine cones
Or ground new ploughed and left to lie
A gash with tiny seeds to heal.
The sky appears and old gray slate
That many a sponge has washed.
The only noise that comes to ear
Is the rasping caw of crows.
A spineless figure dressed in clothes,
'Stuck up to keep the birds away,
Flaps with each gust of shifting wind.
The rain comes down in thickening sheets.
The tiny streams formed by the road
Now turn to foot wide gully shapes,
While all around is deep'ning gray
Obscurity.

SAPPHO

Should some faint note
Of Sappho's deathless lyre
Come singing down the ages
Here to me,
I'd stand with ears astrain
Lest in that brief, sweet, time
I'd lose an instant's ecstasy.
Who knows but in that touch
Of her sweet lyric voice
Some mark would stamp itself
Upon my own.
What greater joy than I should catch
A breathless note, a lark in flight,
For one short moment as it's poised,
A bird caught in a poem

WHEN I WAS IN OHIO

When I was in Ohio
With her yellow waving wheat,
With her grasses and her gardens,
And her clover blossoms sweet,
I thought that seas were keener,
And I longed for mountain heights.
Her sweetly slumb'ring beauty
For me held no delights.
When I was in Ohio.

When I was in Ohio
I saw no rip'ning corn.
No meadows larks entranced me
With their songs at early morn.
My eyes saw other pictures,
Of fir clad, rocky hills,
And sea gulls in the distance,
And a dashing surf that chills.
When I was in Ohio.

Now I have left Ohio
With her fences prim and straight,
With her farms and farmers houses
That show white painted gates.
I see now all around me
Grim hills with pine and fir,
No gently waving grain fields
Bend low as breezes stir.
Now I have left Ohio

Since I have left Ohio
How much I've longed to see
A straight white ribbon highroad
Stretch out in front of me.
I'm tired of fiercer nature
With its bluff and rock grim look.
I'd give a dozen mountains
For just a peaceful brook.
Since I have left Ohio.

O MOON

O Moon, that hangs half sagging,
Half mounting in the sky,
How near you are to my dear heart's desire.
Perhaps, half knowing,
In the solemn hush
She learns from you my own heart's
 yearning fire.
Guard her for me
Who sees her not,
You, who know the loves of all the world.
Look down on her, then look on me,
That I may perhaps a dim reflection see
Of her dear eyes.
Caress with gentle rays
Her face upturned in rapture to your own.
(Would that it were upturned to me.)
My song of love convey to her, a song
Which I send winging up to you.
O Moon, enfold her with your light
And loving you she will but dimly know
That it is I ablend with your great soul
In the graying dimness of the night.

A SONG

The songs of little birds,
Why do they ring so sweet?
Why do they tell my heart
That all of joy is fleet?

How can a song like that
Bring pain beyond compare?
How can they sing all day
When I am dulled with care?

The time was when I loved
To hear each tiny trill.
I knew not then what pain
Their sweet notes could distil.

Now each a mem'ry brings
That's twice as cruel as Death.
But had I not known joy,
No song I'd need forget.

ME

In me no flame of genius burns
With all-consuming fire,
No call of all infinity,
No gift, nor aged desire,
But just the smallest talent dwells,
A small gift not despised,
The gift of life, of hope, of love,
To see with open eyes.

WHY

The purpled clouds draw the sun to sleep—
The loon calls clear and high—
Slowly across the dying light
The wild ducks circle the sky.

The moon an answering signal gives
To the stars in the deep'ning blue.
Why in all this soul's surcease—
Why do I call to you?

FLASH

It is not I who sit here listless
By the window box.
I am far away with you.
This body has its familiar look, 'tis true
I recognize its well known hands
In a closed and half clenched
Grip of wordless agony.
I live but twice within the day.
A signal brings a wakening life,
The shrilling whistle of the man
Who brings me word of you.
His uniform of blue
Is the rainment of the God that we
Call Mercury; he who brought
Glad tidings to and from the Gods.
Should you forget he comes to me
Then I cease to live again
Until the afternoon.
How can this existence that I have
Be called a living life?
It is not I who sit here listless
By the window box.
I am far away with you.

THE SOUL

The soul is the song of creation,
The work of the master of songs.
The greater the heart of elation
The deeper the heart of the song.

REFLECTIONS

I see reflections in the water,
Gray-green mirrors which are your eyes.
I see reflections in the water,
Moving objects which I cannot penetrate
To reach the soul of my desire.

A RAINY DAY IN AUTUMN

Secure within the lamplit room,
Listening to the merry tune
Of the raindrop patter,
Silvery music, dripping, dripping,
Sets the heart beat now to tripping
To its merry chatter.

Without, leaves turning slowly gold,
Here green just red'ning in the fold
Gleam now with rainy lustre.
Shy brown ones like small birds in flight
Drift here, glide there and then they light
Wind blown in a small cluster.

Gray birds, rain foolish, sailing home
Seeking shelter all their own
Rouse others in safe shelter.
Cold twittering drifts to warmer sound,
Soft music as they settle down
Rain dripping helter-skelter.

Thus twilight falls an Autumn day,
Gold bright, red flamed, green-brown array
With duller colors blending.
Gay flags careening in the gale
Which icy fingers soon will hail
And Autumn's at its ending.

IMMORTALITY

We walked the woods,
Just you and I,
And tread the leaves
While passing by,
Pressing them down into the earth.

Carelessly we laughed and played.
I, the man—you, the maid.
We chased the butterflies on the hill,
Down the valley, up to the mill
Whose creaking arms made you trill
With laughter.
Oh, love is big
And love is brave.
Love comes to knight
And comes to knave,
But love came best to you and me.
We laughed and then we sang away
Our glimpse of God's eternity.
Oh, the sun still kisses the hill of old,
The leaves have turned from green to gold.
But to my heart the same old
Love returns.

We walked the woods
Just you and I,
And tread the leaves
While passing by,
Pressing them down into the earth.

MAY MORNING

I woke this morning to the sounds of May:
Awake—my soul—awake.
The joy's in the tree, the lark's in the nest:
Awake—my soul—awake.
From the little green bud that's peeping through
To the shyest violet head so blue
All of it's calling to me—to you.
Awake—my soul—awake.

My heart is weary of the cares of men:
Awake—my soul—awake.
The joy's in the heart that is young again:
Awake—my soul—awake.
The brook is now singing its song to you
As it slips through the glens of lacey dew
Carrying its song the whole day through.
Awake—my soul—awake.

Oh, now is the time to gather the gold
To make—my soul—to make
The coin of the fairest fairy realm.
Awake—my soul—awake.
The buttercups shall the payment be
To buy a soul that is glad and free
To bring my happiest hours to me.
Awake—my soul—awake.

My soul this morning did not heed in vain.
It waked—anew—it waked.
It laughed and played and was young again.
It waked—anew—it waked.
The buttercups brought the fairies out,
The birds and the bees all played about,
And round my feet in the brook the trout
Awaked—my soul—awaked.

THE LETTER THAT I DID NOT WRITE

All the passion, all the hope,
All the love I could have felt
Flamed its way with pen of fire.
Words that burned and tried to melt
The heart so cold to my desire.

All the hatred, all the wrath,
All the white heat of my soul
Wormed itself across the page,
Worked in red on toward its goal.
Hate that tried to last an age.

All the worship, all the love,
All the madness of my heart
Flowed in easy streams of gold.
Words that made the hate depart,
Just the same mad love of old.

MY DEBT

Now am I able to repay
The debt I owe to you,
For just one hour of perfect bliss,
For just one sky of all blue?

A kiss that has its price is bought.
A thousand kinds are old.
The kind that you have giv'n to me
Is neither bought nor sold.

So now I must forever be
In debt to you. I swear
If debt is sweet as this is sweet
Then all of life is fair.

DILEMMA

My Muse, the gay elusive sprite,
Deserted me one rainy night.

Every trap was set for her
The swish of birch and swish of fir

The softened gleam of glowing pine,
Red coals that sink, then flare up fine

Blue flames that seem to sink again.
I called to her aloud and then

She laughed in holy glee at me,
This madcap elf of Poetry.

I SAW THE COWS COME HOME

I saw the cows come home.
Stately they walked beneath the trees
Whose shadows fell in huge dark blotches
'Gainst the gold of sun.

I saw the cows come home.
But in my soul I heard
The stately tread of a thousand feet
Beating hard the pavements at the end
of day.

QUESTION

Why can't I puncture arrow-swift
All moods, all loves, all things?
Why can't I lose myself within
The maze that insight brings?
Why do I stand with calm outlook
When deep I probe a wound
Whose darting pain I've helped to give
And drew the knife too soon?
Why must I stand, a fleshless ghost,
And watch the world go by?
Why can't I sink my inner self
In worlds of things and die?

CREED

The world that sits so snugly by
Condemns the things I'm going to do.
They'll shake their gloomy heads and brew
On ills of things that I will try.

There is a spectre big that rules.
Convention is its common name.
It guards and stunts each one the same,
This man-erected god of fools.

They'll call me queer and nod in glee
With "I told you so's" and other rot.
They'll call me names that I am not
And point the hand of scorn at me.

What shall I care of what they'll do
Or anything that they may say.
My soul with high adventures plays,
My God and I know what I do.

I'd rather play as children play,
Clean-minded, wild, and free.
And let the old fools point at me
As one who needs must stay away.

I'll sail grim seas and land on isles
A thousand leagues away.
I'll seek out lands where fairies play
And sirens try their wiles.

I'll worship hard at beauty's fire
And whisper love songs, too.
I'll do the things I want to do
And leave the world its mire.

A PRAYER

Lord God, Maker of Dreams
Help me to play the game.
I loved and lost, a sorry theme
To bring before Thy Name.
Help me to laugh the hurt away,
To be a friend instead.
Help me to keep the pain within,
To keep far down the naked dread
With which I face the dawn.
The broken dreams, one by one,
Help me to reconstruct.
Let me not weep—a spineless toy—
Tossed by a Fate abrupt.
Help me to see Thy way my way
With shoulders squared—a man of men.
Help me, I pray Thee, to be true
To myself as I know my best.

Amen.

BEYOND THE MOON

Pale moon agleam with ice-cold lustre,
Queen regal of each starry cluster,
Haughty monarch of cold universes,
Pale maid whose splendor now immerses
All the granduer of the other planets.
What gorgeous flame would dare to fan its
Life to seething masses of a hot desire?
Pale moon that mocks with burnt out fire.

* * * *

Now mounting in a breathless dreaming
Close to this blighted mass of seeming,
Thin paleness turns to white-heat flame,
A guardian to a dreamless name,
Forbade desires and maddened brilliancies.
Behind the door now opened to a million
seas

Of scintillating light and matchless
jewels

Comes vampired forms, the death of
famished fools.

No faint shades of pastel dimness stand
profaned

But shades of gory red, a mass untamed,
Purples, robes of kings and queens of
state;

Blues and greens, grim forms of hate;
Gleaming yellows thrown 'gainst black,
Crossing, massing, flashing back,

Seething toward a nameless whole.
Golden birds strut on the bowl
Of diamond fountains glinting bright.
Silver birds reflecting silver light.
Dreams that lie undreamed for years,
Joys for Joys, Tears for Tears,
Maddened dancers, motley throngs,
Lives for Kisses, hearts for songs
Leaping, falling, rising, singing,
Mad desires and Love are swinging.
One last crash of gleeful sounding
Born through space and then resounding.

* * * *

Lessened din and fading glories.
Drab again the pictured stories.
No dreamless sleep can lay the boon,
The land that lies beyond the moon,
That lifeless mass of cold desire,
Pale moon that mocks with burnt out fire.

PERHAPS

When I see your eyes grow bright with pain
(Those eyes that haunt me in my sleep)
After a quarrel so uselessly begun
And ended with a hurt to both,
I weep.

The longing to possess you all in all,
Emotion beast-like in its fury
Haunts my soul that strives the outer door
 of you
And seemingly thrown back upon itself
Remains unsatisfied.

Why do we quarrel—we who love too overmuch?
Except to find anew some poignant pain
Like unto Love new born within our hearts.
We quarrel. We hurt. While eyes grow bright
We love again.

LOVE SONG

My soul flings its love song avaunt
in the breeze.

Carol and caroling on.

Love and the birds bring sad hearts
their peace.

Carol and caroling on.

Nothing so poignant,

Nothing so sweet,

Nothing so rich,

And nothing so fleet,

Carol and caroling on.

Love in its garden grows flowers so
rare.

Carol and caroling on.

Gone from the heart all grief and
despair.

Carol and caroling on.

Happy the flowers,

Happy the bees,

Happy the birds

That flit through the trees.

Carol and caroling on.

Life's at its sweetest when Love is
the mood.

Carol and caroling on.

Gone are all doubts with their heart-
breaking brood.

Carol and caroling on.

Sweetest the fragrance,

Sweetest the thought,

Sweetest the heart

That the bright day has brought.

Carol and caroling on.

WITH YOU

In the evening,
When the day is done,
Comes firelight cheer
And friendly talk begun.
Love's old and still
So new sweet song
Creeps silently
Into the day so long.
When thought with deeper
Thought communes,
And love of old books
And older tunes
Comes stealing softly
Through and through,
Then I am happy
Just to be with you.

I find a joy
Of deep'ning thought
And kindness
For hard battles fought.
And o'er your face
When the firelight gleams
The light of love
And happiness seems
Just to thrill me
With that deep content
That tells me this,
That Love is meant
To be the biggest
Thing we do.
And I am happy
Just to be with you.

THE BULLET FACTORY

Gray mist of early morning —
Dull black smoke hurling itself low
 over the city—
The distant blare and grumbling
 of bells and whistles
Each outstriving the other to rack
 the tired nerves
Of the sleepy-eyed, highly rouged girls
Bumping elbow to elbow with Hungarian men
Reeking of garlic,—
And flat nosed negroes whose blood-shot
 eyes and flat nostrils
Add to the sickening mixture.
The car rolls and bumps,
Clangs and clamors for an opening
 in the traffic.
Tired feet shuffle their way out
 down the half-lighted street
Toward the shop;
Feet overly tired from the dance
 of the night before.
The watchman at the gate salutes each;
To one a terse remark, to another
A greeting quite risque—
All in the day's events.
Again the clang of a bell.
Will that sound never cease?
It is the time clock.
Push the card in the opening,
Press the lever, then the bell.
Oh, well, what's the use?
Illy-ventilated, smelling of brass
Whose particles blacken the broken
 finger-nails,
The room fills with struggling humanity.
This time a louder blare of whistles.
Grease drips, machinery hums,
The arms go forward mechanically to grip
The different levers.
Bright row upon row of finished brass
Leap from hands already tired.
The day has begun.

CIRCUMSTANCE

Beneath the good how far—but far above
the great—Gray

No clasping hand forwarns the welcome
brought;

No smile of friendship greets the hearth's
warm fire;

No calming speech to deeper speech is
sought;

No gladsome hours are spent with heart's
desire.

He dared to do—and daring in the deed
Forewent the solemn trials of lesser creed.

What matter that he gained through this
a soul,

Or daring reached through deeper hell a
goal?

Greater souls from lesser seed have sprung.

The Gods count well the deed that's
better done.

WONDER

I looked up to the smooth round bowl
Of flawless blue we call the sky.
Across the surface moved a cloud
Fluffed out in rounded cotton shapes.
Then, as if jealous of such grace
A cloud of opal splendor came
To try my feeble, mortal, sight.
To charm me more it changed its hue,
Content to shift and stud its pink
Like shells the diver seeks for gain.
It mocked me, laughing, its awed slave,
As wonder-struck, grown mute, I looked.
Then when its beauty grew too great
And strove to break my aching heart
Lo; just behind it gleamed a star,
The star that lights the wearied traveler
As he's homeward bound.
God gives us eyes and hearts and souls
But gives us niggard speech to tell
The glory of His handiwork.

SAHRUH

Like grasses by the sun-kissed banks
Of tawny rivers, O Sahruh,
Sweet grasses swaying lower still
Stirred by the gentle breeze at noon
Your lashes sweep on fairest checks
And cover tawny pleading eyes
As treach'rous as the river's flow.
O Sahruh.

A softened curve of cheek that leads
To softer curves of rose leaf breasts
Yield thoughts of sweet unfed desires.
Come lie you down and bask with me
While soft the breezes swaying low
Bend willing grasses to their whim.
Yield to the scent of lotus bloom.
Let love its fullest measure take
While soft the sun pours down its light
On our dear couch of scented sweets.
O Sahruh.

DESOLATION

My soul is a bruised water-lily.
It raised itself above the calm
Of the placid waters of content
To the warm red air of hot desire.
Now it droops half broken in the cool
 green leaves
Of hopelessness.

LIVING LACQUER

Like black lacquer
Carved by Japanese
Gleams back and forth
With fierce lustre
Shadows on moving waves.
Black on green, green turning black,
Many formed and many patterned,
Snaky paths of shining glory,
Gleaming shadows on moving waves.

ON READING KEATS

Words of exquisite sweetness:
Each wafting perfume as the musk-rose,
Paying homage to the new moon,
Opens her petals to show anew
Her heart.
Or, as, in the passionate stillness
Of the hushed summer afternoon
The bee sips drowsily his treasures
From hearts of flowers filled
With gold.
So, honey-sweet, fall the words
From a pen that fills but does not satiate.

I AM NO POET

I am no poet some will say.
Perhaps they may be right.
I am no poet when it comes
To singing all the sweetest songs
That nature sings to me.
I am no poet, this I know
For other reasons too.
I can't interpret all the moods,
Or even half the thrill I feel
When music masters me.
I am more speechless at the sound
Of violins whose sweetest notes
Set my heart swinging to their beat
Than slaves are speechless 'fore their kings.
I can not write about the eyes
Where I discover empires lay.
Nor can I write about the lips
Whose sweetest kiss I stole one day
And found the joy it brings.
I can not tell the colors rare
When Autumn paints her hues.
Nor can I tell the sweet perfume
Of flowers when the springtime sings
In racing through earth's hardened veins.
If I could tell just half of these
And make you see them too,
Then I'd be more than poets are.
I'd be a God-head too.

WANDERLUST

I long to go on the broad highroad,
Laughing and glad and free,
My arms flung out to the gleaming west,
Just my kit, my books, and me.

Running on the highroad,
Skipping down the byroad,
Heigh O with me.

My head thrown back to the playful breeze
That blinds me with my hair.
I'd turn around the other way
And stream it in the air.

Running on the highroad,
Skipping down the byroad,
Heigh O with me.

In rain or shine or gloomy weather,
Light of heart and lighter feet,
A gay young song I'd hum awhile
To every one I'd meet.

Running on the highroad,
Skipping down the byroad,
Heigh O with me.

A song I'd sell for a bit to eat:
Most every one would buy.
For who is there to resist a song
When there are songs to buy?

Running on the highroad,
Skipping down the byroad,
Heigh O with me.

But here I sit and long for roads,
Roads that are long and free.
But every duty that exists
Keeps my highroad from me.

There's no
Running on the highroad,
Skipping down the byroad,
Alas for me.



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